

Syriac Sources for Seventh-Century History

S. P. BROCK

In view of the paucity of other sources for this century, so momentous in the history of the Near East, the Syriac materials take on a particular importance for both Byzantine and Islamic historians. While some of these sources, such as Michael's *Chronicle*, are well known to all, others lie as yet unexploited and ignored. The purpose of the present article is to collect together in convenient form details of all the main Syriac sources available for the seventh century, listing standard editions, translations and the more important discussions.¹ Fuller information on authors and secondary literature can readily be found by reference to the following works: A. Baumstark, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur* (Bonn, 1922); I. Ortiz de Urbina, *Patrologia Syriaca*, 2nd ed. (Rome, 1965); C. Moss, *Catalogue of Syriac Printed Books and Related Literature in the British Museum* (London, 1962); S. P. Brock, 'Syriac Studies 1960–1970: a classified bibliography', *Parole de l'Orient*, IV (1973), 393–465. For the topographical history of the area now covered by Iraq, J. M. Fiey's *Assyrie chrétienne*, 3 vols. (Beirut, 1965–8), is an invaluable compendium.

1. Brief surveys of the Syriac sources for this period will be found in W. Hage, *Die syrisch-jakobitische Kirche in frühislamischer Zeit* (Wiesbaden, 1966), pp. 4–7, and J. M. Fiey, *Jalons pour une histoire de l'église en Iraq* (CSCO Subsidia 36 [Louvain, 1970]), pp. 14–31.

I. CHRONICLES

The chronicles are arranged below in two sections: West Syrian (of Syrian Orthodox and Maronite provenance, nos. 1–12) and East Syrian (Nestorian, nos. 13–15), and within each section the entries are in chronological order.

Little work has been done so far on analysing the sources of the various Syriac chronicles and studying their relationship to the Byzantine ones. The following provide some initial guidelines: E. W. Brooks, 'The sources of Theophanes and the Syriac Chroniclers', *BZ*, XV (1906), 578–87; N. Pigulevskaya, 'Theophanes' "Chronographia" and the Syrian Chronicles', *JOBG*, XVI (1967), 55–60; A. S. Proudfoot, 'The sources of Theophanes for the Heraclian Dynasty', *B*, XLIV (1974), 367–439. A short survey of the contribution of the Syriac chronicles to Islamic history will be found in J. B. Segal, 'Syriac chronicles as source material for the history of Islamic peoples', in *Historians of the Middle East*, ed. B. Lewis and P. M. Holt (London, 1962), pp. 246–58.

*West Syrian Chronicles*²

(1) *Fragment on the Arab invasions*

A very untidy hand has inserted a (contemporary?) account of the Arab invasion of Palestine on the fly-leaf of a sixth-century Gospel manuscript (BM. Add. 14461, fol. 1). The text is unfortunately totally illegible in places.

Edition: E. W. Brooks, *Chronica Minora*, II (CSCO, Scr. Syri 3 [Louvain, 1904]), p. 75.

Translations: Latin in Brooks, op. cit., II (CSCO Scr. Syri 4 [Louvain, 1904]), p. 60; Syriac text, German translation and commentary in T. Nöldeke, 'Zur Geschichte der Araber im 1 Jh. d. H. aus syrischen Quellen', *ZDMG*, XXIX (1875), 76–82.

(2) *'Maronite chronicle'*

Preserved in BM Add. 17216, fols. 2–14, of the eighth or ninth century, this chronicle was composed in the mid 660s by a

2. Page numbers of editions and translations refer to the portion of the work dealing with the seventh century.

Chalcedonian. The folios covering the first half of the seventh century have been lost, and the surviving narrative opens with the war between 'Ali and Mu' awiya.

Edition: E. W. Brooks, *Chronica Minora*, II (CSCO Scr. Syri 3 [Louvain, 1904]), pp. 69–74.

Translations: Latin in J. B. Chabot, *Chronica Minora*, II (CSCO Scr. Syri 4 [Louvain, 1904]), pp. 54–7; German translation and commentary in T. Nöldeke, *op. cit.*, *ZDMG*, XXIX (1875), 82–98; French in F. Nau, 'Opusculs maronites', *ROC*, IV (1899), 322–8.

(3) *Jacob of Edessa, Chronicle*

From the few fragments that remain it would appear that the plan of Jacob's *Chronicle* followed that of Eusebius', which it was designed to continue, up to 692 (an unknown writer prolonged it to 710). Only a small portion of the work survives, in BM. Add. 14685, fols. 1–23, and little of this covers the seventh century.

Edition: E. W. Brooks, *Chronica Minora*, III (CSCO Scr. Syri 5 [Louvain, 1905]), pp. 324–7.

Translations: Latin in Brooks, *op. cit.*, III (CSCO Scr. Syri 6 [Louvain, 1905]), pp. 248–55; English translation in Brooks, 'The Chronological Canon of James of Edessa', *ZDMG*, LIII (1899), 261–327, and LIV (1900), 100–2.

(4) *List of Arab kings*

A short list of 'Arab kings', from Mohammed to Walid, giving the length of their reigns, is to be found in BM. Add. 17193, fol. 17 (dated 874).

Edition: J. P. N. Land, *Anecdota Syriaca*, II (Leiden, 1868), p. 11 (of Addenda).

Translation: French in F. Nau, *JA*, 11 ser., V (1915), 226 (note 1).

(5) *Anonymous chronicle, ad annum 724*

Also referred to in older literature as the *Liber Calipharum*, this world chronicle is preserved in BM. Add. 14643, fols. 1–57, of the eighth century. Brief entries (not always in chronological order) are to be found for the following years (Seleucid era): A.G. 914, 915, 920, 921, 922, 924, 925, 929, 930, 934, 938, 939, 940,

945, 947. At the end is a brief life of Mohammed and a list of Arab kings from Mohammed to Yezid II, with the lengths of their reigns.

Edition: E. W. Brooks, *Chronica Minora*, II (CSCO Scr. Syri 3 [Louvain, 1904]), pp. 139, 145–8, 155.

Translation: Latin in J. B. Chabot, *Chronica Minora*, II (CSCO Scr. Syri 4 [Louvain, 1904]), pp. 108, 112–14, 119.³

(6) *Anonymous chronicle, ad annum 775*

As far as the seventh century is concerned this chronicle contains little more than a list of Arab kings, with the lengths of their reigns. It survives in BM. Add. 14683, fols. 93–102, of the tenth century.

Edition: E. W. Brooks, *Chronica Minora*, III (CSCO Scr. Syri 5 [Louvain, 1905]), p. 348.

Translation: Latin in Brooks, *op. cit.*, III (CSCO Scr. Syri 6 [Louvain, 1905]), pp. 274–5.

(7) *Ps. Dionysius of Tellmahre, Chronicle*

The false attribution of this anonymous chronicle, compiled in Tur Abdin c. 775, to the Patriarch Dionysius of Tellmahre (died 845) goes back to Assemani. The work is preserved as the upper text of the palimpsest Vat. syr. 162 (+ BM. Add. 14665, fols. 1–7), of the late ninth century.⁴ Part IV covers the seventh and eighth centuries, but for the seventh the entries are very brief.

Edition: J. B. Chabot, *Incerti auctoris chronicon pseudo-Dionysianum vulgo dictum*, II (CSCO Scr. Syri 53 [Louvain, 1933]), pp. 148–54.

Translation: Chabot earlier provided an edition with French translation of just the Fourth Part: *Chronique de Denys de Tellmahre, quatrième partie*, (Bibliothèque de l'Ecole des Hautes Etudes, fasc. 112 [Paris 1895]), pp. 4–11.

3. This edition and translation supersedes that of J. P. N. Land, *Anecdota Syriaca*, (Leiden, 1862), pp. 1–24, 103–22.

4. The underlying Greek text (LXX) was edited by E. Tisserant, *Codex Zuqninensis rescriptus Veteris Testamenti* (Studi e Testi, 23 [Rome, 1911]). Tisserant gives a good description of the manuscript on pp. v–xxxii.

(8) *Anonymous chronicle, ad annum 819*

This contains short entries for the following years (Seleucid era): A.G. 912, 913, 916, 926, 932, 938, 942, 945, 947, 954, 955, 960, 967, 971, 976, 990, 991, 994, 996, 999, 1006, 1008, 1009, 1010, 1011). The chronicle was written in Tur Abdin and survives in a local manuscript of the ninth century.

Edition: A. Barsaum, *Chronicon Anonymum ad annum 819 pertinens* (CSCO Scr. Syri 36 [Louvain, 1920]), pp. 10–13.

Translation: Latin in J. B. Chabot, *Anonymi auctoris Chronicon ad AC 1234 pertinens, I. Praemisum est Chronicon anonymum ad AD 819 pertinens*, (CSCO Scr. Syri 56 [Louvain, 1937]), pp. 6–9.

(9) *Anonymous chronicle, ad annum 846*

This world chronicle, which is preserved in BM. Add. 14642, fols. 1–36, of the tenth century, relies heavily on (8). The folios covering the seventh century have mostly been lost, and the only surviving entries are for the following years (Seleucid era): A.G. 912, 914, 921, 990, 991, 992, 994, 995, 996, 999, 1006, 1008, 1010.

Edition: E. W. Brooks, *Chronica Minora*, II (CSCO Scr. Syri 3 [Louvain, 1904]), pp. 230–2.

Translations: Latin in J. B. Chabot, *Chronica Minora*, II (CSCO Scr. Syri 4 [Louvain, 1904]), pp. 174–6; English (also with Syriac text) in Brooks, ‘A Syriac chronicle of the year 846’, *ZDMG*, LI (1897), 569–88.⁵

(10) *Michael the Syrian (died 1199), Chronicle*

This is much the fullest and the most important of the Syriac chronicles. The seventh century is covered by Books X.xxiv–XI.xvii. For this period Michael gives as his main sources Jacob of Edessa, John of Litarba, Dionysius of Tellmahre and Ignatius of Melitene. A manuscript, dated 1598, of the Syriac text of this massive work was only discovered in 1889 in Urfa (Edessa). It is a transcript of this in facsimile that Chabot published, along with a French translation and index of names.

5. Cf. H. Buk, ‘Zur ältesten christlichen Chronographie des Islam’, *BZ*, XIV (1905), 532–5.

There is also an Arabic translation of the *Chronicle*⁶ and an abbreviated version in Armenian, made in 1248.⁷

Edition and translation: J. B. Chabot, *Chronique de Michel le Syrien*, 4 vols. (Paris, 1899–1924; reprinted Brussels, 1963), II, pp. 374–477 (translation), IV, pp. 387–449 (text).⁸

(11) *Anonymous chronicle, ad annum 1234*

Next to Michael's *Chronicle* this world chronicle (sometimes referred to as the 'Anonymous of Edessa') contains much the most detailed account of events in the seventh century that is available in Syriac. It is largely independent of Michael's work, and the lost chronicle of Dionysius of Tellmahre appears to be one of the compiler's main sources for this period. The text is preserved in a unique manuscript (perhaps of the fourteenth century) that was in private hands in Constantinople at the beginning of the century.

Edition: J. B. Chabot, *Chronicon ad annum Christi 1234 pertinens*, I (CSCO Scr. Syri 36 [Louvain, 1920]), pp. 217–97 (cf. II, 260–3).⁹

Translation: Latin in Chabot, op. cit., I (CSCO Scr. Syri 56 [Louvain, 1937]), pp. 171–231. Extracts, covering the seventh century, in Russian translation will be found in N. Pigulevskaya, *Vizantija i Iran na rubeže VI i VII vekov* (Moscow, 1946), pp. 252–89.¹⁰

(12) *Barhebraeus (died 1286), Chronicle*

This long-famous work is divided into two parts, usually known

6. See Chabot, *Chronique*, I, pp. xliii–l, who states that it must have been made from the Urfa manuscript.

7. See Chabot, *Chronique*, I, pp. l–li; cf also F. Haase, 'Die armenische Rezension der syrischen Chronik Michaels des Grossen', *OC*, n.s. V (1915), 60–82, 271–84. There is a French translation by V. Langlois, *Chronique de Michel le Grand, traduite pour la première fois sur la version arménienne du prêtre Ishok* (Venice, 1866), and another, covering the years 573–717, by E. Dulaurier in *JA*, 4 ser., XII (1848), 281–334, and XIII (1849), 315–76.

8. Cf. H. Gelzer, 'Das Geschichtswerk Mar Michael des Grossen', in *Sextus Julius Africanus und die byzantinische Chronographie*, II (Leipzig, 1898), pp. 431–58.

9. This replaces the older (partial) edition by I. Rahmani, *Chronicon civile et ecclesiasticum* (Charfet, 1904).

10. There is a good introduction, and index to both volumes, in the recent French translation of volume II by A. Abouna and J. M. Fiey (Scr. Syri 154 [Louvain, 1974]).

under the titles *Chronicon syriacum* (secular history) and *Chronicon ecclesiasticum* (church history). The first part, up to 1193, is largely a résumé of Michael's *Chronicle*, although Barhebraeus does sometimes have independent value. The second part is unique among Syrian Orthodox (Jacobite) chronicles in that it also covers the history of the Nestorian patriarchs (for this Barhebraeus draws on Nestorian sources, in particular the twelfth-century Mari ibn Suleiman). Both parts survive in a number of manuscripts.

(a) *Chronicon syriacum*

Editions: P. Bedjan, *Gregorii Barhebraei Chronicon Syriacum*. (Paris, 1890), pp. 93–112. There is an older, and less satisfactory, edition (with a Latin translation) by P. J. Bruns and G. G. Kirsch, *Gregorii Abulpharagii sive Bar-Hebraei Chronicon Syriacum e codicibus Bodleianis*, 2 vols. (Leipzig, 1789).

Translations: English in E. A. W. Budge, *The Chronography of Barhebraeus, being the first part of his political history of the world*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1932) I, pp. 89–105 (vol. 2 contains a facsimile of Bodley, Hunt. 52);¹¹ Latin in Bruns and Kirsch, op. cit.

Towards the end of his life Barhebraeus wrote an abridged version of his *Chronicle* in Arabic under the title 'History of the Dynasties'. This was edited, with a Latin translation, by E. Pococke (Oxford, 1663), and again (without translation) by A. Salhani (Beirut, 1890).

(b) *Chronicon ecclesiasticum*

Edition and (Latin) translation: J. B. Abbeloos and T. J. Lamy, *Gregorii Barhebraei Chronicon Ecclesiasticum*, 2 vols. (Louvain, 1872, 1877), I, cols. 261–96 (West Syrian patriarchs), II, cols. 107–50 (West Syrian maphrians and East Syrian patriarchs).

East Syrian chronicles

(13) *Anonymous chronicle on the end of the Sassanids*

This important chronicle covers the last half-century of Sassanid rule, and was composed between 670 and 680, perhaps in Khuzistan (whence it is sometimes referred to as the 'Khuzistan

11. A Turkish translation of Budge's English version was published in Ankara (1945/50).

chronicle'). The printed text is based on Borgia syr. 82, a modern copy (1891) of an old manuscript preserved in the Near East (probably Alqosh 169 of the fourteenth century).¹²

Edition: I. Guidi, *Chronica Minora*, I (CSCO Scr. Syri 1 [Louvain, 1903]), pp. 15–39.

Translations: Latin in Guidi, op. cit., I (CSCO Scr. Syri 2 [Louvain, 1903]), pp. 13–32; German, with commentary, in T. Nöldeke, *Die von Guidi herausgegebene syrische Chronik übersetzt und commentiert (Sitzungsberichte der Akad. der Wiss., Phil. -hist. Cl., B CXXVIII [Vienna 1893])*.

(14) *John of Phenek, Rish melle*

The last book of John's summary of world history deals with the late seventh century, during the last decade of which the work was evidently written. The product of north Mesopotamia, it contains an account of events in the years following the death of Mu'awiya (680). At the end the work takes on an apocalyptic note.

Edition: A. Mingana, *Sources syriaques*, I (Leipzig, 1907), pp. 141*–71*.

Translations: French (of Book XV only) in Mingana, op. cit., pp. 172*–97* (with index of names). A German translation of extracts from the end of Book XIV and from Book XV, concerning the author's reactions to the Arab invasions, will be found in R. Abramowski, *Dionysius von Tellmahre* (Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes, XXV. 2 [Leipzig 1940]), pp. 5–8.¹³

(15) *Elias of Nisibis, Opus chronologicum*

Bishop of Nisibis for nearly half a century from 1002, Elias is the only major Nestorian chronographer to survive in Syriac. The work, which is in two parts, runs to 1018; the first part contains short entries under each year (sometimes with the source

12. For other manuscripts see S. P. Brock, 'Notes on some texts in the Mingana Collection', *Journal of Semitic Studies*, XIV (1969), 221.

13. For the manuscript tradition see T. Jansma, 'Projet d'édition du Ketaba de Resh Mellé de Jean bar Penkayé', *L'Orient Syrien*, VIII (1963), 87–106. An analysis of Books XIII–XV will be found in A. Scher, 'Notice sur la vie et les œuvres de Yohannan bar Penkayé', *JA*, 10 ser., X (1907), 161–78. Cf. also P. Crone and M. Cook, *Hagarism* (Cambridge, 1976).

indicated), while the second contains calendrical tables. The work is bilingual, in Arabic as well as in Syriac, and survives in an autograph dated 1019 (BM Add. 7197).

Edition: E. W. Brooks, *Eliae metropolitae Nisibeni Opus Chronologicum pars prior* (CSCO Scr. Syri 21 [Louvain, 1910]), pp. 124–55.

Translations: Latin in Brooks, op. cit. (CSCO Scr. Syri 23 [Louvain, 1910]), pp. 60–75. A German translation (with Syriac and Arabic text) of the section in Part I covering the Islamic period is to be found in F. Baethgen, *Fragmente syrischer und arabischer Historiker* (Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes, VIII. 3 [Leipzig 1884]) (with an index of names). French translation in L. Delaporte, *Chronographie de Mar Elie bar Šinaya, métropolit de Nisibe* (Bibliothèque de l'Ecole des Hautes Etudes, fasc. 181, Paris 1910) (with an index of names).

Lost works

Among the lost historical works in Syriac that covered the seventh century the following might be mentioned:

John of Litarba

A younger contemporary of Jacob of Edessa, his chronicle was used as a source by Michael.

Dionysius of Tellmahre

Only one fragment¹⁴ of the genuine work of Dionysius¹⁵ survives independently, but large portions have been taken over and incorporated into their own works by Michael, the anonymous chronicler *ad annum* 1234 and Barhebraeus. See especially R. Abramowski, *Dionysius von Tellmahre: Jakobitischer Patriarch von 818–845* (Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes, XXV. 2 [Leipzig, 1940]).

Daniel bar Mariam (seventh century)

It has often been assumed, on not very good grounds, that Daniel's lost *Ecclesiastical History* was one of the main sources of

14. Published by Abramowski, *Dionysius von Tellmahre*, pp. 138–42 (with German translation) and by E. W. Brooks in CSCO Scr. Syri 39 (Louvain, 1921), pp. 219–24 (Latin translation in Scr. Syri 42 [Louvain, 1924]).

15. Originally covering A.D. 582–842.

the Arabic *Chronicle of Seert* (covering the years 251–422, 484–650).¹⁶ See E. Degen, 'Daniel bar Maryam, ein nestorianische Kirchenhistoriker', *OC*, LII (1968), 45–80, and 'Die Kirchengeschichte des Daniel bar Maryam—eine Quelle der Chronik von Se'ert', *ZDMG Supplement*, I. 2 (1969), 511–16.

II. MONASTIC HISTORIES

All entries in this section are of East Syrian (Nestorian) provenance.

(1) *History of the monastery of Beth Qoqa*

This local monastic history, composed at the monastery of Beth Qoqa¹⁷ about 820, covers the seventh and eighth centuries, beginning with Sabrisho' (died 650), the founder of the monastery. The published text is based on two seventeenth-century manuscripts preserved in Iraq.

Edition and French translation: A. Mingana, *Sources syriaques*, I (Leipzig, 1907), pp. 171–220 (text), 221–71 (translation and index of names).¹⁸

(2) *Isho'dnah, Liber Castitatis*

This ninth-century work contains 140 short biographical notices of monastic figures of N. Iraq, several of whom lived in the seventh century. Isho'dnah also wrote an *Ecclesiastical History*; this is usually considered to be lost, apart from a few citations in later writers, but according to P. Nautin it in fact survives in Arabic translation as the *Chronicle of Seert*.¹⁹

Editions: J. B. Chabot, 'Livre de chasteté composé par

16. The section covering the seventh century is published by A. Scher, in *Patrologia Orientalis*, XIII (Paris, 1919), pp. 435–639 (Index in J. M. Fiey, 'Table des noms propres de la seconde partie de la Chronique de Séert', *Mélanges de l'Université Saint Joseph*, XLII (1966), 201–18). On this chronicle, see also under II (2) below.

17. Cf. Fiey, *Assyrie chrétienne*, I, pp. 130–7.

18. Cf. A. Scher, 'Analyse de l'histoire du couvent de Sabrisho de Beith Qoqa', *ROC*, 2 ser., I (1906), 187–97; also Fiey, *Assyrie chrétienne*, I, pp. 137–52.

19. 'L'auteur de la chronique de Séert: Ishodenah de Basra', *Revue de l'histoire des Religions*, CLXXXVI (1974), 113–26. Cf. note 16.

Jésusdenah', *Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire*, XVI (1896), 1–79, and P. Bedjan, *Liber superiorum* (Paris, 1901), pp. 437–517.

Translations: French in Chabot, op. cit., 225–91 (with index of names). There is also an Arabic translation by P. Cheikho (Mosul, 1939).²⁰

(3) *Thomas of Marga, Liber Superiorum*

Thomas, who flourished in the mid-ninth century, was a monk of the famous monastery of Beth 'Abe in N. Iraq,²¹ later becoming bishop of Marga, in Adiabene (he is not to be identified with Thomas, metropolitan of Beth Garmai, *pace Assemani*). He is the author of two monastic histories, the *History of the monastery of Rabban Cyprian* (in Birta) and the *Book of Superiors*, concerned with his own monastery of Beth 'Abe.²² Were it not for one or two passing references, the reader would be left totally unaware that Thomas was writing under Islamic rule.

Editions: E. A. W. Budge, *The Book of Governors*, I (London, 1893), and P. Bedjan, *Liber Superiorum seu Historia Monasteriorum auctore Thoma episcopo Margensi* (Paris, 1901).

Translations: English in Budge, op. cit., Vol. II (with index of names; Budge's topographical notes in this volume are unreliable); there is also an Arabic translation, with good notes and index, by A. Abuna, *Kitāb al-rū' asā'* (Mosul, 1966).²³

III. LIVES OF SAINTS

Nos. 1–3 are of Syrian Orthodox provenance, no. 4 is Maronite and nos. 5–10 are East Syrian (Nestorian).

20. Cf. J. M. Fiey, 'Isho 'dénah, métropolitain de Basra et son œuvre', *L'Orient Syrien*, XI (1966), 431–50.

21. Cf. Fiey, *Assyrie chrétienne*, I, pp. 236–48.

22. In both printed editions the two works have been run together and placed in the wrong order: the earlier *History of the monastery of R. Cyprian* appears as Book VI, while the *Book of Superiors* features as Books I–V in the editions.

23. Cf. J. M. Fiey, 'Thomas de Marga; notice de littérature syriaque', *Le Muséon*, LXXVIII (1956), 361–6.

(1) *Athanasius the camel driver* (died 631)

Athanasius I was Patriarch of Antioch from 595–631. The acephalous life is a product of the famous monastery of Qenneshre, and is preserved in Berlin (Sachau) MS. 315 of 1481. The surviving portion is mainly concerned with encounters with demons.

Edition and French translation: F. Nau, 'Fragments sur le monastère de Qenneshre', *Actes du XIVe congrès international des orientalistes, Alger 1905* (Paris, 1907), 76–134.

(2) *Marutha of Tagrit* (died 649)

The life of Marutha, metropolitan of Tagrit, was written by his successor to the episcopal throne, Denha, and is preserved in BM. Add. 14645 of 936. There are very few references to political events, and the main interest of the life lies in the information it gives about the expansion of the Syrian Orthodox church in north east Mesopotamia in the early seventh century.

Edition and French translation: F. Nau in *Patrologia Orientalis*, III (Paris, 1909), pp. 52–96.

(3) *Mar Gabriel of Qartmin* (died 667)

Gabriel was bishop of the famous monastery, still named after him, situated near Qartmin, some 20 kilometres east of Midyat in Tur Abdin. Only extracts of his life, preserved in BM. Add. 17265, have so far been published.

Edition and French translation: F. Nau, 'Notice historique sur le monastère de Qartamin', *Actes du XIVe congrès international des orientalistes, Alger 1905* (Paris, 1907), 19–31 (translation), 62–75 (text). A further extract with French translation is given by Nau in *JA*, 11 ser., V (1915), 272–5.

(4) *Maximus the Confessor*

This life, incomplete at the end, is preserved in BM. Add. 7192 of the late seventh or eighth century. The author is a monothelite bishop, George, originating from Reshaina, who is implicitly described as a 'Maronite' in the Syrian Orthodox chronicle *ad annum* 1234. The life contains much new information about the dyothelete/monothelite controversy.

Edition and English translations (with commentary): S. P. Brock, 'An early Syriac life of Maximus the Confessor', *AB*, XCI (1973), 299–346.²⁴

(5) *The Emperor Maurice*

A brief history of the 'holy Maurice, emperor of the Romans' was published by Nau from a Nestorian manuscript,²⁵ Paris syr. 309, of 1869. It is almost entirely concerned with the revolt of Phokas and Maurice's death.

Edition and French translation: F. Nau in *Patrologia Orientalis*, V (Paris, 1910), pp. 773–778.

(6) *Sabrisho'* (died 604)

The life of this Nestorian patriarch was written by a younger contemporary, Peter the Solitary. The work includes an account of the conversion of the Lakhmid Na'man to (Nestorian) Christianity.

Edition: P. Bedjan, *Histoire de Mar Jabalaha, de trois autres patriarches, d'un prêtre et de deux autres laïques nestoriens* (Paris, 1895), pp. 288–327.²⁶

(7) *Rabban bar 'Idta* (died 612)

A biography of this Nestorian monk, written by John the Persian some time after 661, survives only in a verse résumé of the eleventh century. Among other things it contains an interesting allusion to the battle between Heraclius and Chosroes near Nineveh in 627.

Edition and English translation: E. A. W. Budge, *The Histories of Rabban Hormizd the Persian and Rabban bar Idta*, 2 vols.

24. Cf. J. Gribomont, 'Documents sur les origines de l'Église maronite', *Parole de l'Orient*, V (1974), 95–132.

25. So correctly (see *ROC*, XVI (1911), 281) Nau on p. 767 of his edition, but on p. 698 he describes the life as 'Jacobite'. On purely internal grounds it can hardly be a text of Jacobite provenance (see R. Paret in *REB*, XV (1957), 72), although it does happen to survive also in a Jacobite manuscript (unknown to Nau), Harvard syr. 59, written in Midyat in 1857.

26. Cf. Fiey, *Assyrie chrétienne*, III, pp. 56–9.

(London, 1902), I, pp. 110–202 (text), II (Part I), pp. 163–304 (translation).²⁷

(8) *Rabban Hormizd* (sixth/seventh century)

There are three lives in Syriac available in print, all of which are full of legendary material:

(a) Prose life, attributed to the monk Shem'un, disciple of R. Yozadaq (seventh century).

Edition and English translation: E. A. W. Budge, *The Histories of R. Hormizd*, I, pp. 3–109 (text), II (Part 1), pp. 3–160 (translation).

(b) verse, by Emmanuel of Beth Garmai (died 1080).

Edition: G. Cardahi, *Liber Thesauri de arte poetica Syrorum* (Rome, 1875), pp. 142–5.

German summary: G. Hoffman, *Auszüge aus syrischen Akten persischer Märtyrer* (Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes, VII. 3 [Leipzig 1880]), pp. 19–22 (cf. 179–82).

(c) verse, by Sergius of Azerbaijan (sixteenth century?).

Edition: E. A. W. Budge, *The Life of Rabban Hormizd and the Foundation of his Monastery at Al-Kosh* (Semitistische Studien, II–III [Berlin 1894]).

English translation: Budge, *The Histories of R. Hormizd*, Part II.²⁸

(9) *George* (died 615)

The life of this martyr, a convert from Zoroastrianism (his original name was Mihramgushnasp), is the work of the great Nestorian theologian Babai (died soon after 628). Babai also wrote the life of another convert from Zoroastrianism who was martyred, Christina (Yazdoi) of Beth Garmai, but only the proemium of this survives.²⁹

Edition: P. Bedjan, *Histoire de Mar Jabalaha* (Paris, 1895), pp. 416–571.

German translation: O. Braun, *Ausgewählte Akten persischer Märtyrer*

27. Cf. J. M. Fiey, 'Autour de la biographie de Bar Éta', *L'Orient Syrien*, XI (1966), 1–16, and *Assyrie chrétienne*, II, pp. 269–83.

28. Cf. Fiey, *Assyrie chrétienne*, II, pp. 534–41.

29. Ed. P. Bedjan, in *Acta Martyrum et Sanctorum*, IV (Paris, 1894), pp. 201–7.

(Bibliothek der Kirchenväter, 22 [Kempten/Munich 1915]), pp. 221–77. German summary in G. Hoffmann, *Auszüge aus syrischen Akten persischer Märtyrer*, pp. 91–115; French summary in J. B. Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale* (Paris, 1902), pp. 625–34.

(10) *Isho'sabran* (died 620/1)

The life of this martyr, another convert from Zoroastrianism, was written by the patriarch Isho'yahb III, and is addressed to the monks of the monastery of Beth 'Abe. The work is almost exclusively concerned with his trial. The text, of which the end is lost, survives in Vat. syr. 161.

Edition and French summary: J. B. Chabot, 'Histoire de Jésus-sabran, écrite par Jésus-yab d'Adiabène', *Nouvelles Archives des Missions scientifiques et littéraires*, VII (1897), 485–584.³⁰

IV. SYNODS

(1) *Synodicon orientale*

The acts of two seventh-century Nestorian synods, held in 605 and 676, as well as a letter from the patriarch George to a chorepiscopus Menas, written in 680, are preserved in the late eighth-century collection of Nestorian synods known as the *Synodicon orientale*. There also survives an account of the assembly of Nestorian bishops that was summoned in 612 by Chosroes II (at the instigation of Gabriel of Sinjar) in order to hold a public dispute with the 'Theopaschites' (i.e. Syrian Orthodox).

Edition: J. B. Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale* (Paris, 1902), pp. 207–44, 562–80 (assembly of 612).

French translation: Chabot, *op. cit.*, pp. 471–514, 580–96 (assembly of 612).

(2) *Maronite fragment on the Sixth Council*

This short acephalous text, preserved in BM. Add. 7192 of the late seventh or eighth century, gives reasons why 'we' (probably the Maronites) cannot accept the Sixth Council.

Edition and English translation (with commentary): S. P. Brock, 'A

30. Cf. Fiey, *Assyrie chrétienne*, I, pp. 46–7.

Syriac fragment on the Sixth Council', *OC*, LVII (1973), 63–71.

V. CANONICAL LITERATURE

(1) *West Syrian*

A survey of the West Syrian canonical literature of the seventh century will be found in A. Vööbus, *Syrische Kanonessammlungen. Ein Beitrag zur Quellenkunde, I: Westsyrische Originalurkunde*. I, A (*CSCO Subsidia* 35 [Louvain, 1970]), pp. 190–223 and I, B (*CSCO Subsidia* 38 [Louvain, 1970]), pp. 273–99. Particularly important is the figure of Jacob of Edessa (died 708).

(2) *East Syrian*

Twenty-five legal decisions of the patriarch Henanisho (died 699/70) are published (with German translation) by E. Sachau, *Syrische Rechtsbücher*, II (Berlin, 1908), pp. 1–51. Twenty-two canons on inheritance by Simeon of Rev Ardashir also belong to the seventh century; these canons, which were originally written in Persian, will be found in Sachau, *Syrische Rechtsbücher*, III (Berlin, 1914), pp. 203–53 (cf. pp. 345–62).³¹

VI. LETTERS

(1) *Colloquium of the patriarch John with an Emir of the Hagarenes*

This is preserved in the form of a letter from the Syrian Orthodox Patriarch John I, to be found in BM. Add. 17193 of 874. The colloquium took place on Sunday 9 May of an unspecified year; Nau took this to be 639, but according to Lammens the date should be 644 (*JA*, 11 ser., XIII (1919), 97–110).

Edition and French translation: F. Nau, 'Un colloque du patriarche Jean avec l'émir des Agaréens', *JA*, 11 ser., V (1915), 225–79 (text: pp. 248–56; translation: pp. 257–64).

(2) *Isho'yahb III (died 659)*

106 letters by the energetic East Syrian patriarch Isho 'yahb III

31. Cf. J. Partsch, 'Neue Rechtsquellen der nestorianischen Kirche', *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtswissenschaft*, XXXIII (1909), 355–98.

survive, arranged chronologically in three parts. Though mostly concerned with ecclesiastical affairs, a number of passages throw interesting light on church-state relations under early Islam. The collection survives in Vat. syr. 157 of the late eighth century (and some more recent apographs); there is a lacuna at the head of Ep. I and at the end of Ep. XII.

Edition: R. Duval, *Isho 'yahb patriarchae III Liber Epistularum* (CSCO Scr. Syri 11 [Louvain, 1904]).

Translations: Latin in Duval, op. cit. (CSCO Scr. Syri 12 [Louvain, 1905]) (with index of names). The Syriac text and English translation of the first part, with letters written while Isho 'yahb was bishop of Mosul (i.e. before 628) will be found in P. Scott-Montcrieff, *The Book of Consolations, or Pastoral Epistles of Mar Isho 'yahb of Kephlan in Adiabene*, 2 vols. (London, 1904).³²

(3) *George I*

For a letter, dated 680, by the East Syrian patriarch George I, see IV (1).

(4) *Athanasius II*

There is a collection of canonical decisions by the Syrian Orthodox patriarch Athanasius II (684–6) which bears the (secondary) title 'Letter of the blessed patriarch Athanasius to the effect that Christians should not partake of the sacrifices that the *Mhaggraye* now have'.

Edition and French translation: F. Nau, 'Littérature canonique syriaque inédite', *ROC*, XIV (1909), 128–30.

VII. APOCALYPTIC TEXTS

It has already been mentioned that John of Phenek (above, I (14)), writing in north-east Mesopotamia in the 690s, ended his work on an apocalyptic note. The end of the seventh century and the early eighth century was a period of tension that gave birth to

32. Cf. W. G. Young, 'The Church of the East in 650 A.D.', *Indian Church History Review*, II (1968), 55–71, and *Patriarch, Shah and Caliph* (Rawalpindi, 1974), pp. 85–99; J. M. Fiey, 'Isho 'yaw le Grand. Vie du Catholicos nestorien Isho 'yaw III d'Adiabène (580–659)', *OCP*, XXXV (1969), 305–33, XXXVI (1970), 5–46.

apocalyptic literature within the fold of all four major religions, Judaism, Christianity, Islam and Zoroastrianism. There are a number of Christian texts available in Syriac, of which the first is of particular interest.

(1) *Apocalypse of Methodius of Olympus*

This apocalypse, which enjoyed a great popularity in the medieval west, reached Latin (ed. Sackur) by way of a Greek version (ed. Istrin) that was itself originally translated from Syriac. The complete Syriac text, to be found in Vat. syr. 58 of 1564, has not yet been published, and only fragments from other Syriac sources are available in print. The title of the apocalypse as preserved in Vat. syr. 58 specifically mentions Sinjar as the region of its origin, and in the course of the text it is stated that Arab rule will come to an end before the 'tenth week' is up (i.e. $622 + 70 = \text{A.D. } 692$).³³ The writer himself is clearly living in the last apocalyptic week (i.e. 685–92), and one of his primary interests is in rumours of greatly increased taxation, when even the dead will have to pay poll-tax. It seems very likely that the author is writing shortly before Abdulmalik's census of 692, on the basis of which tax reforms were made in north Mesopotamia.³⁴ The author looks for a restoration of Byzantine power, and foretells the recapture of Jerusalem by a Byzantine emperor.

Editions and translations: F. Nau, 'Révélation et légendes: Methodius-Clément-Andronicus', *JA*, 11 ser., IX (1917), 415–52 (cf. 455–61) (incomplete text taken from Paris Syr. 350 and Cambridge Add. 2054); extracts from Ps. Methodius are also to be found in Solomon of Bosra's *Book of the Bee* (Nestorian, thirteenth century; ed. E. A. W. Budge [Oxford 1886]), chaps. 53–5. All these are Nestorian, whereas the unpublished Vat. syr. 58 is West Syrian.³⁵

33. By this time the A.H. reckoning was in general use (e.g. BM. Add. 14666, fo. 56, of A.D. 682/3, dated A.G. 993 and A.H. 63), and P. J. Alexander is misled in his dates, basing them on the conquest of Iraq: see his 'Medieval apocalypses as historical sources', *AHR*, LXXIII (1968), 1001.

34. See D. C. Dennett, *Conversion and Poll Tax in early Islam* (Cambridge Mass., 1950), pp. 45–6.

35. Cf. M. Kmosko, 'Das Rätsel des Ps. Methodios', *B*, VI (1931), 273–99; K. Czeglédy, 'Monographs on Syriac and Muhammadan sources in the literary

(2) *Apocalypse of Esdras*

Probably dependent on Ps. Methodius is an 'Apocalypse on the kingdom of the Ishmaelites'.

Editions and translations: F. Baethgen, in *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*, VI (1866), 199–211 (German), and J. B. Chabot, 'L'apocalypse d'Esdras touchant le royaume des Arabes', *Revue sémitique*, II (1894), 242–50 (text), 333–47 (French translation).

(3) *Poem on Alexander the Great*

A poem of nearly 800 lines, on the subject of Alexander and the gates which he built against Gog and Magog, is wrongly attributed to Jacob of Serugh (died 521). According to Hunnius it must have been written between 628 and 637. It includes veiled references to the campaigns of Heraclius and Chosroes II.

Edition and German translation: C. Hunnius, 'Das syrische Alexanderlied', *ZDMG*, LX (1906), 169–209, 558–89, 802–21.³⁶

English translation: E. A. W. Budge, *The History of Alexander the Great* (Cambridge, 1899), pp. 164–200.³⁷

(4) *Ps. Ephrem, On the last judgement*

Sections 3–5 of this work contain predictions concerning the Arabs and Gog and Magog.

Edition and Latin translation: T. J. Lamy, *S. Ephraemi Hymni et Sermones*, III (Malines, 1889), cols. 189–98.³⁸

(5) *Apocalypse of John the Less*

Probably from north Mesopotamia and dating from the end of

remains of M. Kmosko', *Acta Orientalia*, IV (1954), 36–9; P. J. Alexander, 'The Syriac original of Ps. Methodius' Apocalypse', *Proceedings of the twenty-seventh International Congress of Orientalists* (Wiesbaden, 1971), 106–7.

36. For earlier editions see S. P. Brock, 'The Laments of the Philosophers over Alexander in Syriac', *Journal of Semitic Studies*, XV (1970), 217.

37. Cf. K. Czeglédý, 'The Syriac legend concerning Alexander the Great', *Acta Orientalia*, VII (1957), 246–9, and 'Monographs', pp. 35–6.

38. Cf. K. Czeglédý, 'Monographs', pp. 34–5.

the seventh or early eighth century, this short apocalypse is preserved in an eighth-century manuscript.³⁹

Edition and English translation: J. R. Harris, *The Gospel of the XII Apostles together with the Apocalypses of each one of them* (Cambridge, 1900). pp. 34–9 (translation), 15*–21* (text).

(6) *Bahira legend*

According to this legend, which in its present form can hardly be earlier than the eleventh century, the prophet Mohammed received instruction from a Christian monk, Bahira (or, according to a tradition known to Mas'udi, Sergius). In its Syriac form the work is in three parts: 1, the meeting of the supposed author, Isho'yahb, with Bahira, together with an account of the latter's vision on mount Sinai and his visit to Maurice and Chosroes II; 2, the meeting between Bahira and Mohammed; 3, an apocalypse. It is possible that the text may incorporate some early material. The legend is also to be found in Arabic (ed. Gottheil).

Edition and English translation: R. Gottheil, 'A Christian Bahira legend', *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie*, XIII (1898), 189–242, XIV (1899), 202–52.

*The Oriental Institute,
Oxford*

39. Now Harvard syr. 93 (formerly Harris syr. 85).